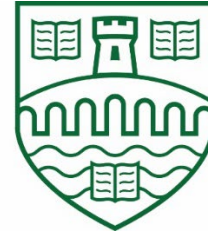


**UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING**



ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK POLICY

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Contents

Purpose	3
Definitions	3
Scope	3
Purpose of feedback	4
Principles of effective feedback	4
Minimum standards	4
Feedback design	5
Tools used to deliver and/or enhance feedback	5
Developing feedback literacy	6
Feedback which promotes wellbeing	6
Dialogue	7
Quality	7
Timeliness	7
Examinations	7
Faculties	8

Purpose

1. Feedback is an essential part of learning and teaching at the University of Stirling. This policy explains what feedback is, the principles of effective feedback, and the responsibilities of academic staff, Faculties, and students.
2. Feedback helps students become better independent learners, and everyone involved in teaching and learning, including the students themselves, have specific responsibilities to make this happen.
3. The policy operates in conjunction with the Assessment Policy.

Definitions

4. **Feedback.** Assessment feedback is guidance which highlights strengths and weaknesses in student work and clearly indicates how to improve in the future. With that focus on future development the term includes “feedforward” for the purposes of this policy. It encourages students to develop their academic skills, self-regulation and independence. It can be delivered informally or formally, individually or in groups, and can come from various sources, including the student themselves, other students and staff. Examples of forms of feedback include written or oral online feedback on formal assessments on Canvas or other University platform; peer feedback; outcomes of practice assessments, quizzes and polls in class; discussions with tutors, mentors and other students; generic class feedback; feedback from proofreaders; comparison to exemplars and written or oral feedback from placement providers or industry professionals.
5. **Formative assessment:** Formative assessment is an essential part of a student learning experience and should be part of any programme assessment strategy. Formative assessments do not contribute to the module grade but provide opportunities for learning and feedback to encourage students to reflect and adjust their approach, to maximise their success in subsequent summative assessments. They also inform tutors on levels of understanding and skills development in the cohort. Formative assessment can include class exercises as well as formally submitted work.
6. **Summative assessment:** Summative assessments contribute toward module grades and are used to indicate the extent to which a learner has met the learning outcomes of a module or programme. Feedback provided on summative assessments will provide opportunities for learning by encouraging students to reflect and adjust their approach in future to maximise their success in subsequent summative assessments and will explain the mark awarded. They also inform tutors on levels of understanding and skills development in the cohort.

Scope

7. This policy applies to all the University’s taught programmes, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

8. Whilst this policy does not prevent Faculties from introducing feedback practices that are additional to those set out in this policy, no practice or procedure may be adopted that either conflicts with or undermines it.

Purpose of feedback

9. Effective feedback not only helps students improve their work, but it also helps them become independent learners. It does so by encouraging them, through dialogue with their tutors, to develop the skills to accurately judge their own work using all relevant sources of information. It builds their confidence and supports them to reflect on their learning and goals. It also helps them track their progress, be flexible, resilient and stay motivated. These are valuable graduate attributes.

Principles of effective feedback

10. Effective feedback is:

- **Constructive and supportive:** motivating, to build confidence and support reflection.
- **Clear and accessible:** easy to understand, without jargon and in a format and location that the recipient can and know how to access.
- **Frequent and embedded:** planned across a programme, to have greatest impact.
- **Timely:** given when the recipient can use it to improve in the module but, perhaps more importantly, across their programme.
- **Goal-referenced:** a clear indication of performance against assessment criteria and future improvement steps. It gives clear examples of what is required to improve and how this can be achieved.
- **A dialogue:** a prompt for discussion and reflection on learning and performance with staff and others. For example, as a class discussion or small group or individual discussion with staff, personal tutors, other students or Student Learning Services.

All staff will follow these principles of effective feedback in their own practice and will set out these expectations to students and others who provide feedback to students.

Minimum standards

11. Certain minimum standards are expected in the provision of feedback:

- Explicit training on assessment criteria and how to give, interpret, reflect on and act on feedback should be embedded in every programme.
- Subject to paragraph 14 below, individual feedback will be provided on all summative coursework.
- Examination feedback will be provided at class level if not individual.
- Feedback will be returned:
 - i. Within 15 working days of the relevant submission date for coursework (excluding weekends and University holidays).

- ii. After the relevant Module Board for both examinations and dissertations/equivalent independent study projects.
- At the outset of a module, and as part of programme information where there is a programmatic approach, students will be advised what feedback they can expect to receive, the form that will take, how they access it and when they will receive it.

Feedback design

12. Academic staff should plan opportunities for feedback across programmes. This can take various forms but should be purposefully and holistically designed to be impactful, pedagogically appropriate, and sustainable for staff.
13. Students should have regular formative assessment opportunities, especially before undertaking new forms of assessment or moving between levels of study. The balance of feedback offered between formative and summative assessments is a matter for professional academic judgment, based on effective feedback and wider pedagogic principles. For example, where a formative and summative assessment are designed to work together, full individual feedback may be provided on the formative assessment and less feedback provided on the summative assessment. However, where individual feedback will not be provided, students should be advised of the overall feedback strategy and rationale in advance.
14. Often feedback is most effective when received immediately, or shortly after an activity. Opportunities for immediate, informal, “quick and dirty” feedback on formative assessments is encouraged.
15. Where feedback is offered on summative coursework, feedback should be provided electronically via Canvas/Speedgrader, or other University platform. Marking rubrics, such as in Speedgrader, should be used where pedagogically appropriate on all summative coursework, which provide students with an indication of their performance against the assessment criteria. Additional feedback should be given as appropriate, for example in the form of inline comments or recorded oral comment. For the avoidance of doubt, this may not be appropriate for some forms of assessment such as MCQs.
16. Where feedback is offered, there should be at least one constructive point which identifies what went well in the assessment and two to five clear action points on what to do to improve for the future. This may be delivered in a range of formats.
17. Care must be taken to deliver feedback which is inclusive in its language and approach, suitable for students from a range of backgrounds, cultures and circumstances. It should be clear and without jargon. The format and location of feedback should be easily accessible for all students and instructions on how to do so should be shared regularly.

Tools used to deliver and/or enhance feedback

18. Digital and other tools may be used to deliver and enhance feedback for students. For example, currently the Canvas platform delivers feedback electronically in written and

aural formats. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is creating opportunities which may enhance feedback mechanisms now and in the future.

19. Where AI or other software tools are used to generate feedback, the academic remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of the feedback.
20. Whenever tools are introduced, Faculties or those introducing such tools must fully assess the pedagogic appropriateness of the approach and the impact on students and staff including their intellectual property rights and data protection where external providers are involved, and any equality, diversity and inclusion impact of implementing the tools. Where appropriate, piloting such tools on formative assessments should be considered and student consultation should take place.

Developing feedback literacy

21. Focus should be given to building confidence and feedback competencies in students within the design of every programme of study. In doing so the purpose and value of feedback and activities designed to develop feedback competencies should be clearly explained and illustrated to students.
22. Competencies required to get the most out of receiving feedback include being able to identify key feedback messages; being open to alternative ideas and strategies; managing the emotional dimension of feedback; having the confidence and ability to seek out feedback; discerning between different sources of feedback to identify the most useful feedback for their progress, planning and adopting changes to approaches. Exercises such as student marking exercises, peer feedback, co-producing rubrics and other aspects of assessments with students, action planning to integrate feedback into practice; pre-assessment discussions and discussing feedback all help develop feedback literacy and confidence.

Feedback which promotes wellbeing

23. Receiving feedback is emotive and students who experience feedback as a negative process can disengage from the process going forward, restricting their development and compounding low confidence and esteem. This can make the difference between continuing studies or withdrawing. The tone and language used in feedback should remain constructive and supportive while providing clear action points for development. When returning feedback, reference to support available from [Student Learning Services](#), [Student Support Services](#), [subject librarians](#) and [Spectrum Life](#) should be routine. Consideration should be given to follow up with vulnerable students, for example those who have failed the assessment, where more than simply signposting support services may be appropriate.

Dialogue

24. Students, and especially those with resits or reassessments, should be encouraged to take the opportunity to discuss their feedback with staff at an appropriate time, to help them clarify, process and reflect on feedback.
25. Students, in turn, should take responsibility to access and use feedback to improve future work and celebrate their strengths. They should proactively seek help and discussion with staff and peers to support their development.

Quality

26. Academic staff should continually review their own feedback practices through moderation processes, sharing good practice and Continuing Professional Development. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement team will provide resources and training and development opportunities to support academic staff. Staff in subject areas should work together to achieve consistency in feedback quality and complementary approaches in and across modules. Faculties should promote and support the sharing of good practice and development of academic professional practice.

Timeliness

27. If the return of feedback is delayed by exceptional circumstances, staff should provide an explanation and new return date.
28. Where students are provided with a coursework submission deadline extension, the feedback return period runs from the new submission deadline or actual submission date, if later.
29. If students submit work after the submission deadline, a mark against an assessment criteria rubric should be provided to the student as a minimum. Staff may use their discretion on whether to provide additional feedback, and the nature of the feedback, while bearing in mind that weaker students may have most to gain from feedback. The student should be advised accordingly and advised to contact [Student Learning Services](#) for support.

Examinations

30. Where the format of the examination allows, brief feedback should be provided to justify the mark and provide key action points for future improvement. In some cases, this may be brief individual feedback, in other cases this may be detailed question-based feedback for the whole cohort. More detailed feedback where a resit will be required is recommended.

Faculties

31. Faculties should monitor the timeliness, consistency and quality of feedback practices.
The quality of feedback should be considered in terms of its effectiveness and the student experience of feedback. This can be achieved through monitoring the moderation process, External Examiner comments, module evaluation data and NSS and PTES results.
32. By following these principles students will receive effective feedback at times when it can be best used to improve subsequent work, while making effective use of academic staff time.